

City Of Muskegon

Vacant Building Registration 2013 Moratorium of fee FAQ

Planning Dept. Phone 231-724-6702/Fax 231-724-6790

1. What is the purpose of the moratorium ?

The Vacant Building Registration ordinance was adopted in late January 2008. This time period coincided with the beginning of some very difficult times for our country such as job losses, home foreclosures and falling property values. Because of these and other difficult situations property owners have fallen victim to the Muskegon City Commission wanted to provide some economic relief to the property owners that are receiving a second, third or fourth invoice for a vacant building in 2012. To be eligible property owners would have kept their vacant properties in good move-in condition. In addition, these properties will have to meet certain criteria approved by the commission to be eligible for the moratorium of their fee.

2. Do I qualify for the moratorium of fee?

To qualify for a fee moratorium your building and property must have already been registered as a vacant building and you have already been invoiced for the first year it was vacant (those having only received the first invoice can apply for the one-time waiver available in the original ordinance). In addition, you must meet all 5 criteria set by the city commission. The criteria are:

1. All taxes & fees, such as property taxes, mowing charges, past vacant building registration fees, landlord registrations, business registrations and any other applicable fees, must be fully paid and current.
2. All city supplied utilities (water & sewer) for the property must be fully paid.
3. There were no more than 2 environmental letters sent to the address with no work being performed at the address in the vacancy years in question.
4. The building owner can demonstrate that they have made recent investments in the vacant building during the vacancy period or in the case of a building in good condition, they have continued to provide the necessary financial support for the building to be in usable and move-in condition.
5. The property had been listed for sale, rent or lease with a professional realty firm during the past vacancy period and is currently listed for sale, rent or lease with a professional realty firm.

3. I think I qualify, how do I apply for this moratorium of fee?

You must wait until you are invoiced in 2012 before you can apply. After you have been invoiced, you must apply within **30 days** of the invoice date. There is a simple one page form to apply for the moratorium but you **must** provide the necessary documentation to conditions four and five above. To fulfill condition number four you could include copies of any permits for work performed during the vacancy period if you had been remodeling, if the building was in move-in condition you could describe what you had done to maintain the property such as the expenses involved with property maintenance such as mowing, leaf pick-up or other landscape improvements. As a further example for condition number five you could include the realty firms listing sheet showing the dates the listing is in effect with your appeal. Regardless of your situation, you must be able to qualify under all the above conditions to be considered. Once the form is completed, the form can simply be faxed to us at **231-724-6790** or mailed to the address on the form.

4. If I qualify, what will happen if my building is still vacant for another year?

Invoicing will continue at the next invoice level above where you are in the fee schedule now.

5. Where do I get a form to begin the process?

The form to apply for the moratorium is the Vacant Building Appeal Form and it is available in the Planning Department at city hall or at our website:

<http://www.muskegon-mi.gov/departments/planning/planning-forms/>

The Vacant Building Registration ordinance is Chapter 10 Section 107 of the City of Muskegon's Code of Ordinances and can be found online at:

<http://www.muskegon-mi.gov/departments/city-clerk/code-of-ordinances/>